



THOUGHTS FROM THE MODEL T GARAGE...

By Ed Moran

Gather a small group of Model "T" owners together and I promise you can get a lively discussion going just by innocently asking which timer works best on the "T".

Let's talk about the system Henry designed into our beloved T's. A low voltage mechanical timer to send 6 volts to the coils. With something that simple nothing can go wrong, right?? As all of us who have cussed this system know, there are several problems with this "low-tension" design.

Ford knew there were problems with the timers as evidenced by their continuous experiments with various materials and designs starting almost the day the "T" came out in 1909 and continuing right up until they last one came off the assembly line in 1927.

Henry buried the timer down on the front of the engine where it is not particularly easy to get at but it is certainly easy for oil, dirt and water to find it! If you're using a conventional timer with a roller then a little oil is needed but it should be clean oil and it should be a small amount of oil.

The "Tiger" timer is the modern day equivalent of the original Ford timer. Some folks swear by them and others swear at them. To get reasonable life and smooth operation, the "Tiger" needs to be cleaned and oiled just about everytime we take our "T" out. Being a lazy gny, this is not my favorite timer!

Another popular timer design was the "New Day" timer. It was sold during the model "T" period and is still available today from any Model "T" parts supplier. The "New Day" uses a bakelite housing with a spring-loaded copper brush which wipes around and over for copper contacts. The timer case says, "Never needs oiling" but a little lubriplate smeared around the path of the rotating brush will greatly increase the life of the "New Day" timer. A quick wipe and fresh lubriplate every once in a while won't hurt anything either but it is more maintenance free than the "Tiger".

The problem with both these timers is the relatively short life they have. Most folks I've talked with say they replace these timers each season or about every 1000 miles. Back in the Model "T" period both these timers could be bought new for about a dollar to a dollar and a half but now you won't get too much change when you hand the friendly parts man a ten and a twenty for one!



Which brings us to my favorite for long trouble free timer operation...

Again, back in the "T" era, there was a company that sold seemingly hundreds of gadgets and accessories for the Model "T". The company was "The Anderson Company" and their product name was "Anco". You'll find many of their ads in the magazines of the period. One of their products was the "Anco" Timer. It used a different principle than the "Tiger" or the "New Day". It used a spring-loaded steel brush which pressed against four steel fingers as it rotated around the housing. This eliminated the biggest problem with both the "Tiger" and the "New Day" which was the uneven wear between the metal contacts and the insulating material on either side of the contacts! The insulation, being softer, always wore faster and, sooner or later, caused the roller or brush to jump when it passed over the high/low spots! The Anco didn't and doesn't have this problem!

The Anderson Company and Anco are long gone but a fella by the name of Bob Thompson has resurrected the Anco design and upgraded it to use today's modern high grade steel for the contacts and brush. Folks, this timer is a winner! Bob is so confident, he gives a 2 year warranty on it! Just like the "EverReady bunny", it just keeps going and going! I've got one on my '12 Touring that's got 4000 miles on it now and it still ticks along like new!

You'll find the ad for the Anderson timer in the Vintage Ford and I notice that Smith & Jones and Langs have them in their catalogs. They cost a little more but they're well worth it. You probably won't have to buy another one.

See you down the road..